

## THE SECRET

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John, a middle-aged man, lived in Gerrards Cross on the west side of the city. He wasn't a very happy man because he was a widower but he was glad his adult life wasn't as bad as his childhood life. Back when he was a kid, his home life wasn't fair at all. His parents were unfair to him; they were selfish, rude and never respected him. He found happiness with his wife Kerry who he met at aged five.

So here he is, working hard in office at the Terry Towers and being humble about it. Although he is sad and bad-tempered, he knows how to calm down and he would never, ever do anything to harm anyone. Inside him he has a little secret which he keeps to himself.

His secret is that he would love to join the air force and, at the weekend, he goes to a piloting school. He doesn't tell anyone else who works in the building because they might tell his boss who would get so mad at the idea he will immediately become enemies with him.

Three weeks ago, at the weekend, John had just finished piloting school and was relaxing at home. Then the phone rang and he answered it. It was his boss. "John" said the boss gruffly down the phone. "I've organised a business meeting in Florida. Meet me at Heathrow airport at six o'clock sharp AND NO OTHER TIME!" "Okay" said John, trying his best to keep calm at his boss shouting at the end of the phone and he slammed down the receiver. He didn't dislike his boss; he hated him.

Next morning, John had to get up really early, much to his annoyance. He arrived at the airport at exactly the right time and got his plane. It was a seven-hour flight but, at last, they were preparing to land at Florida airport.

Suddenly something went wrong; the pilot couldn't slow down the plane. "Hold on!" called the pilot to the passengers. "I can't slow this plane down. Stand by for crash landing!" By now the plane was diving down towards the runaway. At last the plane's front wheel hit the ground so hard it knocked the pilot out.

The two back wheels hit the ground but, when they did, there was a sudden bursting noise. "What's happened?" cried John shaking all over with real fear. He peered out of the window and, beneath him, he saw smoke. "The tyre's burst and caught fire!" he exclaimed. "I do hope the pilots are all right," He got out of his seat and walked across.

"Where do you think you're going?" shouted the boss across the plane. "You're breaking the rules. We haven't been told to get out of our seats and you know it." John ignored him and walked all the way to the pilots' cockpit. When he got in, he discovered what had happened to the pilot and that the co-pilot had parachute-jumped out before the plane had landed.

"Oh no!" thought John. "I'm going to have to drive the plane myself." So he got into the co-pilot's seat and found out that the plane was going far too fast and heading straight for the end of the runway. "I must do something" he thought and he

remembered that, at piloting school, he had learnt to put down the wings' flaps to increase the pull-back and to put the engines into reverse thrust. He did that straight away.

The plane was still going much too fast. John knew the stewardesses were trembling and he could hear the passengers screaming. He knew it was up to him to save the plane. Then the plane stopped just on the edge of the runway. The tyre was still badly burning and was almost reaching the plane but the stewardesses knew what to do.

They opened the emergency exits, rolled out the slide and calmly let everyone out. John was the last one to get out, as he was the pilot, but he was such a hero, even his boss shook hands with him. "Amazing" he said. "Where did you ever learn that?" "Well..." said John nervously. "I never wanted to tell you this but...I go to piloting school" he whispered but his boss kept his smile.